

Horsham District Council Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Matrix

The purpose of this HRA screening record is to assess the need for appropriate assessment in relation to the project detailed below.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) requires that a Habitats Regulations Assessment screening is carried out in relation to any plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on Habitats (European) sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Habitats sites are Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. Ramsar sites should also be given the same level of protection, as stated within the National Planning Policy Framework.

In line with the Court judgement (CJEU *People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta* C-323/17), mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a development is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats site.

Where an Appropriate Assessment is carried out a project may only be authorised after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site(s) concerned.

Table 1: HRA Screening matrix for water neutrality

Stage 1 HRA screening	
Brief description of the development project	Application reference: DC/26/1007
	Application address: Mount View Stane Street, North Heath, West Sussex, RH20 1DN
	Application description: Engineering operation to create attenuation basins and swale.
	Type of application: Full (minor)
	Planning officer: Daniel Holmes
Details of the development project	Proximity to Arun Valley SAC / SPA / Ramsar: Is the application site: A) Within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone (WSZ) YES B) Within the 5km Zone of Influence for functionally linked habitats for Arun Valley SPA / Ramsar site No. C) Is the Arun Valley SAC / SPA / Ramsar potentially impacted by the development: No direct pathway identified in respect of bat SAC impacts. Water neutrality is assessed separately by Horsham District Council. D) If YES to question (A) is the planning application directly connected with or necessary to the management of the a SAC/SPA/Ramsar site? No. The proposal is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA or Ramsar site.
Brief description of the Habitats sites within scope of this assessment	The following Habitats sites have been considered within this assessment: Arun Valley SAC / SPA / Ramsar

	The Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site are designated for important wetland habitats, invertebrates and bird populations. The site lies approximately 9.2km from these designations and no direct connection to the qualifying features has been identified. The Mens SAC The Mens SAC is designated for internationally important woodland habitat and populations of Barbastelle bats (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>). The application site falls within the identified Key Conservation Area associated with the SAC and therefore consideration must be given to potential impacts upon habitat connectivity, commuting routes and foraging habitat used by Barbastelle bats. Ebernoe Common SAC Ebernoe Common SAC is designated for internationally important woodland habitats and populations of Barbastelle and Bechstein's bats. The application site falls within the Wider Conservation Area associated with the SAC and therefore potential impacts upon habitat connectivity and supporting habitat require consideration.
Key vulnerabilities / factors affecting site integrity	Key vulnerabilities affecting site integrity include: • Habitat loss and fragmentation of supporting habitat. • Severance of commuting and foraging routes used by Barbastelle bats. • Changes in land management affecting habitat availability. • Disturbance arising from lighting. • Hydrological changes. • Air pollution. The Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar site has historically been subject to water neutrality considerations associated with water abstraction within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone. However, Natural England issued a Withdrawal Statement on 31 October 2025 in relation to its previous Position Statement and interim advice. Accordingly, water neutrality considerations are addressed separately by Horsham District Council under the Council's current approach and are not relied upon as part of this bat SAC screening assessment
HRA Screening Assessment Criteria	
The individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar site	The application seeks permission for the construction of a self-build dwelling with detached garage on land to the rear of Mount View, Stane Street, North Heath. The site lies approximately 3.4km southeast of The Mens SAC and approximately 8.8km southeast of Ebernoe Common SAC. The site is located within the 6.5km Key Conservation Area associated with The Mens SAC and within the 12km Wider Conservation Area associated with Ebernoe Common SAC. The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal confirms that the site comprises modified grassland, developed land and sparsely vegetated urban land. There are no trees or hedgerows within the application site and no buildings suitable for roosting bats. Place Services therefore agree that no further bat surveys are required. There is one record of Barbastelle bat within 2km of the site, recorded approximately 1.7km southwest of the application site in 2010. However, the proposed development does not occur along any identified Barbastelle flightline and would not result in the loss of significant foraging habitat or severance of

	commuting routes associated with Barbastelle bats. Habitat connectivity within the site would be maintained. The development would not result in direct land take from any European site, would not affect woodland management within the SACs, would not result in habitat fragmentation, and would not introduce invasive species. External lighting will be avoided or minimised, with any future lighting capable of being controlled by condition. Accordingly, no likely significant effects have been identified in relation to habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, commuting routes, woodland management, invasive species, lighting disturbance or air pollution, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
Test 1 the significance test: – Can a judgement be made as to whether there could be any potential significant impacts of the development on the integrity of the Arun Valley SPA/SAC/Ramsar.	Having regard to the submitted ecological information and the advice from Place Services, the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposed development would not result in the loss of functionally linked habitat, severance of established commuting routes or fragmentation of habitat networks associated with either The Mens SAC or Ebernoe Common SAC. The site contains no trees or hedgerows that could function as key commuting features and the proposed development does not lie on any identified Barbastelle bat flightline. Habitat connectivity would be maintained and external lighting would be minimised and controlled where necessary. Place Services conclude that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the bat SACs and have advised that a project-level HRA Screening Report be completed to record the Council's decision. The Local Planning Authority therefore concludes that the proposal would not give rise to a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) on the qualifying features of The Mens SAC or Ebernoe Common SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. Conclusion: Can a judgement be made as to whether there could be any potentially significant impacts on the integrity of the Arun Valley SAC/SPA/Ramsar? Having undertaken this Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening and having regard to the conservation objectives of The Mens SAC and Ebernoe Common SAC, Horsham District Council concludes that the proposal would not have a Likely Significant Effect on the designated features of either European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Accordingly, the proposal can be screened out at Stage 1 and there is no requirement to proceed to Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). That wording is broadly consistent with the assessment and conclusion already provided by Hayley Dean of Place Services and should be defensible within the officer report and HRA record

Approving Planner: Daniel Holmes
Date: 28.09.2026